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ABSTRACT

Ways in which pluralistic communities can exist in peace and harmony through consent rather than force are discussed. Historical and sociological determinants, which should be considered when coexistence is sought, are politics, color, religion, nationalism, national aspirations, language, employment, and educational systems. Problems which arise in connection with these determinants are analyzed. For example, freedom of religion is universally desired but has often lead to dogmatism and war, as it did in Ireland, Lebanon, India, and Crete. Although language serves as the most intimate articulation of the individual and his group, it can also serve as a barrier to those who do not speak or understand the official language. Skin color has influenced governments to adopt policies of apartheid or integration, but each policy has encountered problems. Case studies of Rhodesia and South Africa are presented. The problems of dealing with the determinants in a way that fosters human rights, educational excellence, intergroup cooperation, and responsible government are discussed. Honesty, consideration of differences, and meaningful association of diverse groups within a culture are necessary in a culturally pluralistic society and can be achieved when political autonomy, moral authority, and religious faith supercede selfish dictatorship. (Author/DB)

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THE ACCOMMODATION OF SOME HISTORIC DETERMINANTS IN A CULTURALLY PLURALISTIC SOCIETY

1. The problem of how to "accommodate" (govern?) groups of people who differ widely in respect of basic historical determinants, such as ethnics, religion, language, culture, colour, etc. and who find themselves together in the same geographical or political framework - whether by design, force or conquest - is as old as mankind itself. Indeed what we know of the human race would appear to consist of a series of attempts to ensure survival of the fittest and strongest and to dominate, exterminate, isolate, segregate, integrate, repatriate, dominate, subjugate any "contrary" group. In the process whole nations have perished or disappeared, and often new ones, or new ones in combination, have risen, phoenix-like, from the ashes of the "departed" ones.

   The disappearance of certain social structures and of whole civilizations can be ascribed in the main to such a structure's unwillingness or inability to respond adequately to the ideological, ecological, physical challenges and forces which demanded recognition. Imperial powers ranging more recently from the Assyrian, Persian, Greek, Roman, Spanish, British, Russian, to mention but a few, in the end have discovered that their biggest problem was how to "rule" their cosmopolitan and divergent conquered communities. Indeed so fierce has been the competition between the various "belligerent" forces - both human and environmental (physical) - that it has been reckoned to have been responsible for the destruction of about ninety-three percent of mankind.

2. In our days the physical and social mobility and herd-groupings have been stabilised in some parts of the world, and the rationale of many voluntary groupings with participatory rights and responsibilities, is a far cry from the days of imperial domination or enslavement of one's fellow-man. In this process some societies or communities with completely social and psychic divergencies have been thrown together, or have found themselves together within one ecological framework, or have not had the time or the privilege or power to become each completely "independent" or autonomous. Such pluralistic or multi-cultural societies exist in some forty to fifty major cases around the world, and in each one, this bi-cultural or multi-cultural facet seems to occupy the core of planning and governmental concern.

3. One ought then to distinguish between those societies which are forced to co-exist because they either did not have the right, the power or the inclination to "break up", and those which, through force of circumstances, would appear at a

...particular..../

particular stage to have no alternative but to co-exist or live together, and where they must either flourish conjointly or decay severally. In such a society a form of co-existence - based not on force but on a broad consensus of consent - had to be "manipulated" intrinsically and internally in order to ensure peace, security and harmony. The mere fact of their togetherness was difficult enough, but in many cases it was soon discovered that there were elements so far apart that they found themselves almost incompatible. In others new "revolutionaries" refused to fraternise with the traditional system or the elite - and vice versa. New leaders sought to generate new enthusiasms with new ideas for the social, political and economic system of such a 'state' - which was in most cases hardly a "national" concept; for loyalty in these pluralistic societies was in the main still based on ethnicity and only secondarily on the "state". Indeed in some cases some of these groups would like to see the "State" demolished - even by outside forces - so that they could have "their own 'new' way".

But assuming that such a pluralistic society has come into existence as a *fait accompli*, where domination and "integration" have been discarded, where one group considers itself on the same level as another, where the constant revolutionary and rebellion potential has been contained, and where each group or community feels entitled to its "place in the sun"; and that there are essential differences, perhaps inferiority, perhaps superiority, equality or inequality, numerical superiority, leadership qualities and talent - then the question is still, how can such a community continue to live in peace and harmony together, at least for the foreseeable future? It is then that a variety of historical and sociological determinants have to be recognised and taken into consideration, not only in the day to day living and planning, but also in the longterm philosophy of co-existence.

4. In such a heterogeneous society, it must further be accepted and conceded as a starting point, that apart from common systems of <u>faith</u>, of <u>order</u> and of <u>progress</u>, there are several "components" with individual group dignities, each group accepting itself for what it <u>is</u>, and also for what it is <u>not</u>, and desirous of maintaining its own group-identity within this existential framework of inescapable relationships. If <u>justice</u> - which Plato described as the first prerequisite for harmony, order, and peace in any society - is to be done to all groups (conceding their right and desire of being and remaining different) then what part should the following historical and sociological determinants play: Language, politics, colour, religion, nationalism or "national" aspirations vis-a-vis the national or State character, employment, and an educational system which must provide, in turn, answers to queries such as: compulsory, free and universal education and the financing thereof, differentiated educational programmes in the interests of the individual groups vis-a-vis that of the society as a whole, what co-ordination of courses and curricula, what representation of parents on school committees and Council, what is to be the role and philosophy of teachers and teacher training and societies and their uniform conditions

...of service?/

of service?

5. 1. Religion, for example, if admitted and permitted - and if not permitted an immediate area of serious conflict will arise - allows freedom of worship. But how is this freedom to be expressed if there is suspicion of "dogmatism" at the expense of another religion? How is it to be expressed in the educational programme? Is the solution that of the United States of America or Australia? Should the child of one group be allowed - even forced - to withdraw from "religious instruction" because his parents wish it? And what if the child wants to be with his peers?

Some of the most tragic wars over the last two thousand years have been because of religious, semi-religious or religious-cultural or religious-ideological convictions, and not seldom have children been mobilised - take the Crusaders - and thus the victims. At this very moment civilized "religious" communities are blotting out families and children because of religious differences. In Ireland two Christian groups are killing one another; in Lebanon Christian and Muslim; in the Middle East, Jews (Judaism) and Arabs (Islam); in North Africa, Islamic States, in India and Pakistan, Hindus and Muslims. Cyprus, Crete, Sudan, Nigeria are a few other examples of the force of this factor in a bi-cultural or multi-cultural society.

5. 2. Language has also been called the soul-expression of a total people, because it is so intimately bound up with one's background, with the "national", with the most intimate articulation of the individual and his "group". It is, in its advanced form, also an expression of the stage of maturity which a community has reached, or is potentially capable of reaching. So, what "part" must we allow to each of these languages or linguistic groups if there is a common *lingua franca* ? - and if there is not? What place should the mother tongue be allowed to occupy in daily routine and in the schools - even of smaller groups? Should they disappear, or be allowed to disappear, perhaps needlessly impoverishing the bigger as well as the more concerned community? And how much or how little should be incorporated in the school's programme? Is the answer a "one-language" state, such as the United States or Britain or France? Or, to mention but a few, is the solution better in Canada with English and French, in Belgium with French and Flemish, in Switzerland with French, German and Italian, or in South Africa with Afrikaans and English - some with language boundaries such as Canada and Belgium, provinces or cantons such as Switzerland or India, or official pragmatic solutions such as South Africa? And if the "home" language is not carried into the educational situation, what effects would education through a foreign medium have on the psychological and personality development of the ordinary, of the intelligent child? How long does it take for another language to become a replacement language, to become an official language? What about the "creative" aspect during these years, and is it not better to "sacrifice" one or two generations in the interest of the future "whole" or solidarity? Who writes and provides the textbooks in the meantime and what role is the official language - if there is one - to play in public and private debates?

5.3 If culture.../

5. 3. If culture represents man's or a community's total response to the challenge of his creation and his physical and spiritual environment, then this can never be ignored since the cultural roots are embedded in the individual and group personality of each community in a plural society. It is this cultural concept and heritage which lends a distinctive characteristic to a particular "people" or group. Without this, one group could perhaps easily merge with the other. How are we jointly and severally to deal with an element which constitutes, in the main, the particular "identity" of each group?

5. 4. And, if there are ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural and other basic differences in this society, what is the task or philosophy of the educational process which constantly must seek to develop to the full the potential of each child in the service of God and Man? Who is to determine these underlying and basic goals and philosophical concepts in the educational ideals, policies and programmes at the grass root, secondary and tertiary levels? Should religion, the mother tongue, culture, constitute an integral or a subsidiary part? And what is the ideal "content" of such a programme? What the administrative requirements and the aspirations which parents have for their children in respect of this school's programme? How much time is actually spent on "intergroup" relations?

5. 5. Colour has certainly become one of the dominating features in Western society over the last one hundred or more years. We do not know enough of the role colour has played in past history but it is certainly an historical and sociological phenomenon and determinant today and ever since slavery came to be associated in the minds of many Whites with black or brown coloured peoples. One of the most tragic civil wars was fought over this issue just over a hundred years ago in the United States. From this emerged a variety of "solutions" such as separate, separate but equal, desegregation, integration on the one hand with the American Black people moving (as did Blacks in other plural societies where they could not get "in control") from an era of objectification to an era of segregation, to an era of ethnicity, to an era of Africa-identification, to an era of desegregation (interpreted by them as integration), to an era of frustration, indignation and anger, to an era of Black Power and Black Consciousness. Of the present state of affairs a report (1971) by the Policy Institute of Syracuse University, U S A (after researches) said: "Disruption is positively related to integration. Schools which are almost White or all Black are less likely to be disrupted. This might suggest a policy of 'apartheid' as a solution to disruption, but this option is unavailable. Short of a total moral conversion, the American society will continue to behave in such a way as to ensure some degree of pathological unrest in our urban high schools for a long time to come". Is this perhaps the Achilles heel of the United States of America?

And it is a burning issue in World Councils today and especially in Africa and, hence, in my own country, South Africa, as part of Africa, where our official policy of segregation (apartheid) has been called a threat to world peace.

Colour is such an overt identifiable differential in a plural society that, if not carefully handled, could easily side-track other issues and disrupt priorities.

6. 1. We could continue to analyse more of these distinctive determinants and attributes of a plural society where the final relationship is not merely the sum, but the product of all of these 'factors'. We could indicate perhaps how evolution provides new and better opportunities and create still newer aspirations and further complicate "solutions". But the basic charge of these plural societies forever remains how to draw closer together in spite of differences, how to expand a philosophy of belongingness and how to accommodate each other's traditions and aspirations.

It is in this regard, as an example, that I wish to refer to two areas of plurality with which we are somewhat familiar, to indicate the complexity of such a state - always far more difficult to "govern" than a single state from whose angle "solutions" appear so obvious and so easy! I refer to Rhodesia and South Africa, since these two countries are apparently considered the main threats to world peace. They are typical examples of a multi-cultural society.

The problem in Rhodesia is relatively simple in that there are, in the main, just four different ethnic groups: two Blacks (6 000 000) and one White (300 000) and one Coloured i.e. Asian and Coloured (30 000), or two groups - one African and one Non-African. The two Black groups comprise: the Mashona 77% and the Matabele ± 17% (the others, 6%, are small tribes (Tonga, Sena, Hlengwe, Venda and Sotho).

In comparison with those in many African countries the indigenous population of Rhodesia is "relatively" homogeneous, but cultural and language differences as well as historical factors divide these two groups as sharply as in any other community. The Matabele have been the strong and warlike tribe linked to the Nguni of Central Africa and the Zulu of South Africa. They hounded and drove the Mashonas into the mountains until the White man appeared some ninety to a hundred years ago, to subdue the Matabele, occupy the land and to force peace on the population groups, which have since expanded considerably. But the Mashona have never forgotten. (People in Africa are like elephants: they rarely forget - although they will tolerate - for centuries - if need be!) The political dilemma which seems to occupy the thinking of the world, concerns the granting of power to the "majority" which might also be Black. Should this rule go to the majority tribe, the more docile Mashona, who constitute about 5 000 000 of the 6 000 000? But this the more belligerent Matabele will not have or tolerate and a civil war is sure to erupt should the Mashona be given the power of "majority" rule. The Whites maintain that they have a different style of life and living and are entitled to a say in "civilised" government and that it constitutes the historical element of leadership. Also the Asians and Coloureds claim superiority over the "African" in terms of civilisational criteria. Each group demands a right to a political and educational programme that would recognise the

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cultural, ethnic and language differences. True, it was a British Colony, where English could be used, but this would certainly not replace the indigenous languages of the Mashona or the Matabele. Assuming that a "political" solution is found, what language medium will be used?

But what is meant by "majority rule"? What role should merit or meritocracy play in such a society, bearing in mind that the first description of an ideal, harmonious (and therefore "just" society), was outlined many hundreds of years ago by Plato? Here the wisest and noblest were to be the rulers - the guardians, the most talented and most advanced; then would follow the warriors, then the workers, then the slaves. In this society, to be viable, the political set-up required a certain educational set-up - a basic education to all but the gifted were to be selected and specially trained for the top positions of leadership in his "Republic". (Compare the recent U S A drive: Education for Excellence).

If there is any truth in the remark which A N Whitehead made that all of Western philosophy was nothing more than one long footnote to the philosophy of Plato, then the question about who should rule might, in this case, be those who have been "civilised" the longest. At one time it was the holy men or the clergy, at another the generals, at another the aristocrats, at another the Kings, at another the Middle Classes, or those of wealth. Who must it be today in Rhodesia? The numerically stronger Mashona - the militarily strong Matabele - the culturally stronger Whites-cum-Asians?

6. 2. In South Africa, similarly, there are ± 12 000 000 Blacks consisting of eight major tribes (nations) of which the Xhosas (four million) and the Zulus (four million) are the largest, with the Whites also ± four million and the Coloureds and Asians almost 3 000 000.

As a result of historical events the Whites have become the traditional rulers of South Africa - the Whites being divided into two main groups - the Afrikaners 66% and the English 34% - who believe in maintaining their own languages, school system, religion etc. So do the various Black groups. The Asian and Coloured being indifferent, except that the Asians - for whom the policy of repatriation did not seem to work - have five linguistic groups (Tamil, Hindi, Telugu, Gujerati, Urdu) (apart from the Chinese) and two religious groups, the Hindus and the Muslims who wish to retain their religion also in the schools, when the basic constitution of the country determines that South Africa will still be a "Christian" country. What system of "living" let alone education does one advocate in such circumstances, with so many groups practically all with histories of racial wars and conflict? If integration is rejected as impossible and undesirable, how does one segregate? In separate geographical areas? Independent or interdependent? And where separate areas or homelands are not possible? And where the Whites live cheek by jowl with the African, Indian and Coloured? One school or separate schools? Repatriate ? (as in the case of attempts to send the Asians from the new African States) Subjugate or dominate, claiming one system, one language, one culture superior?

7. No matter.../

7. No matter which way we look at it, when a multi-cultural or plural "state" has once been formed and when this is a *fait accompli* - undesirable or not, as it might be - then it would appear essential that a simple formula be agreed upon and that is that the groups will accommodate each other almost as a family accommodates one another. This basic (agreed to) principle throws the responsibility on one group or community and, more particularly, on the group that considers itself the strongest, whether in numbers, culture or leadership, to take the initiative in finding ways and means to accommodate the other community, so that the one group will seek to foster the interests of the other group, as much as it is interested in fostering its own group.

8. In this concept is contained the scientific relation of man to man, community to community. It also contains man's and his community's relation to God and hence operates on the simple concept that God has a Plan for everyone, and that for this particular multi-cultural society He must surely also have a Plan. Every unit is a contributory and unique member of the family, and each community is to be seen as having a particular part to play in that Plan - a part which only he is privileged to play - and if not performed leaves a vacuum or an unfulfilled segment for all time. Furthermore every segment is a necessary and vital component of the whole and therefore no segment is expendable - even if there are weak links. It makes of no man or community a "problem" and it does not stigmatise a community, therefore people, as the problem. On the contrary, the concept of an enriched and privileged society should form the basis of the educational programme. Out of this positive starting point arises the dynamism of a new co-existence in a multi-cultural and multi-cellular togetherness. Whatever blesses one blesses all, and there is an ever-sharpening intuition, greater and greater capacity to respond to new situations and awareness of growth as a continual process rather than an end to be reached.

9. This ability to anticipate the needs and aspirations of the other group and to forget the fears that one or other of the groups would force domination, segregation, subjugation, integration, etc. does not come of its own accord and very often the older elements in the various communities would cherish these fears (and like them). It needs to be taught and practised in practical situations - and even in controlled situations if need be. Therefore school and university programmes ought to be redesigned and constantly reviewed to ensure that due, or if need be, enforced attention be given to this basic aspect of the order and peace in this plural society (because we continually work on the assumption that no other alternative exists but living together). In many cases a radically new image of the needs and essentials of the society must constitute the major part of the news media - especially the television and newspapers, and especially if there is a declining influence of church, school and family, because of the enormous role these media play in shaping values, attitudes, behaviour, lifestyles of contemporary societies everywhere. They must assist in

...creating.../

creating a new environment, eschewing negative and violent presentations at all times. All this is very much in agreement with the main facts and conclusions reached from the world's first truly international discussion of this subject held in Yugoslavia in 1965 with representatives of twenty-three countries and thirteen international organisations concerned with this problem. From the topics discussed to ensure the realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms to all without discrimination as well as to ensure the realisation by ethnic, religious, linguistic or national groups of their special rights necessary to enable them to preserve their traditions, characteristics or national consciousness, there emerged *inter alia* the following specific and general conclusions : Specific -

(a) The right to use the language of the group in everyday life, in courts of law, and in public or assembly.

(b) The right to association.

(c) The right to establish autonomous educational institutions.

(d) The right to develop their own traditions and characteristics autonomously.

(e) Equal treatment of economic regions within a country.

General -

(a) All Governments should promote and protect the rights of ethnic, religious, linguistic or national groups, not only through the adoption of constitutional and legislative provisions, but also through the promotion of all forms of activities consistent with the political, economic and social conditions of the State or country concerned.

(b) In the international field, it was agreed that various forms of co-operation, based on both bilateral and multilateral agreements, should be encouraged and utilized with a view to supplementing the measures already being taken to promote as free as possible an exchange at every level in the fields of trade and culture, as well as contacts between individuals, regardless of differences in political systems.

(See Plural Societies 1971 Vol.2 No 1 p.76.)

10. There are, however, two basic conditions of such accommodation. The necessity of honouring each historical determinant per se and its nearness and dearness to each group and to each individual in each group, has already been mentioned. Following on this there must be the observance of a set of common rules by all. These could and must be intergroup directed (i.e. man to man and group to group) - almost like common traffic laws - and each one

...must know.../

must know that non-observance of these "rules" can never be tolerated and carries severe reprimand and penalties - and every child and adult must simply know that these rules are accepted and agreed upon as a *modus vivendi* by all. Perhaps one could mention just two or three of these viz. honesty and consideration. The education of honesty in the smallest detail is always, everywhere and for everyone an absolute and constant necessity, for without this element in human relations, every other successive programme will be lamentably weakened and have "feet of clay". And the challenge to and for such honesty demands as much response from each child as it does from each adult in each community.

Even consideration depends on honesty, for without honesty such expressions of "consideration" could easily become sentimentality, patronage and nepotism. But like the "considerate" driver on the road who would try to put the other man's interest first instead of claiming his "right" to the road (often killing himself or the other person), so the considerate fellow-citizen would, with peace in his own heart, try to impart peace, patience, love, understanding in ever-widening circles because the release of these qualities will provide the impetus to "universal" peace.

Thirdly, there is the presence of an inferiority or superiority complex - the latter, more often than not, just a backfiring of the former. Neither of these characteristics can be tolerated in a peace-seeking plural society which is, as stated earlier, held together not by force but by consent. Of course, there is the old argument that it is easier to associate with individuals of the other group than with that group as such. Perhaps this fact should also be recognised where group cultural differences are so disparate that it would be futile to pretend they do not exist. This, again, depends on whose culture would appear to be "dominant" and this again would depend on the broad ecological or environmental framework in which this plural society moves and has its being. In many instances it would be nonsensical to regard the technological and biological advances of the Western world and mind as negligible in a society where Western criteria play a part. But if a purely African or Asian plural society regards its culture and heritage as not only sufficient unto itself but in fact spiritually superior to that of the Western, then such a culture carries a material richness and superiority which the other has not yet achieved. In such circumstances the pyramidal concept of each community in that society is also a natural one. The pyramidal point of the culturally rich and avanced Group A would have become refined over centuries and in consequence, its base narrowed. In the other Group (B), whose base would still be broad, the pyramidal point would, in consequence, be much lower. It then behoves the "advanced" Group A to do its utmost and to sacrifice to enable the pyramidal point of Group B to be raised by a process of upward and forward mobility by pouring as much as is humanly possible into the base (foundation) of this group. In this way the potential of meaningful association groupwise is increased because the level of the pyramidal points are more and more beginning to lie on the same plane. This might be true for a whole

...community.../

community or for one aspect in such a community, e.g. Music. It would be senseless to expect a "backward" or ignorant community to have an intelligent and associative appreciation of Western music when they have not been exposed to it.

11. In conclusion: three points. It is our convinced feeling that in such a plural society the opportunity should be given to any group, if it considers itself viable, if it regards itself with justification as a separate, viable, national group, physically, culturally as well as from a religious and linguistic point of view and it wishes to preserve its own culture and tradition, and it can be accommodated separately without encroachment, then it should be allowed to become "independent" politically, and thus "autonomous", With its own autonomous identity, it can decide whether it wishes to come back and be re-accommodated on a federal or confederal basis, or not.

It is the inalienable right of any "nation" to honour its heritage and develop separately its distinctive culture and tradition. No force can extinguish the dreams or the embers of that inalienable right in the hearts of human beings - man or woman, civilised or less civilised, Believer or Pagan. This is what Colonel Ojukwe must have meant after the recent Nigerian-Biafran genocide (1968) when he said at the peace talks in Addis Ababa: "We as a people seek nothing but peace and security - peace to save us from extermination, security to enable us to develop our talents for the upliftment of Africa". If this peace and security can be obtained and preserved by "separation" to enable this group to live quietly and happily, to advance to prosperity and welfare along lines of its own destiny, then it is not to be considered too much to ask nor too much to grant. It is simply one form of <u>accommodation</u>.

But equally true is the fact that the transactive way of looking at one another in a plural society and its environment must also be allowed to play its full part. This transactionist view is that the nature of anything, reality, is not an *a priori* 'given', but is a function of the way it is experienced transactively. Nothing has a prior given nature, everything has only an experienced nature, so that within the vast realm of experience certain new truths and desiderata and facets of knowledge - and hence of new bindings and relationships - can be developed. A deliberate "problem"-solving kind of experience could thus become part of the philosophy of the whole society. Experience is not co-terminous with reality and new desirable experiences can become the new reality. In this way a whole <u>new</u> society can take the place of an existing "plural" society.

Secondly, in a plural society, "politics" is not the final game of statesmen. Politics is to be concerned merely with the broadest general governmental machinery. For the real game is people and people relationships. Hence some machinery should be created which would act with "moral" authority - rather than political authority - and it should be above the "political" game. Again, to quote from Nigeria, the words of a great man, Dr Azikiwe, the Ibo leader

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in the forefront of the battle for Nigerian independence from the imperial power which sought to link together in a pluralistic commonwealth, nations of so many diverse heritages: "When I proposed that Nigeria should become a federation of eight regions, I was being political, not sociological in my approach. I did not necessarily overlook the "tribal" factor, but in my approach, I deliberately minimised it". Playing politics with the destiny of people is taboo in a multi-cultural state.

Finally, it might mean or necessitate the actual application of a new dimension of Faith. And why should it not be? The only effective counteralternative to an atheistic or selfish dictatorship is a dynamic expression of an ideology of trust in God, too often neutralised or forgotten these days. When William Penn said that "Man must either choose to be governed by God or he condemns himself to be ruled by tyrants," he laid down a moral code which is the only safe one on which a multi-cultural society can hope to exist and co-exist and move forward in peace and trust and security and appreciation.

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